Agreements in the energy sector

2743. SHRI SANJAY RAUT: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have made agreements with various countries, particularly U.S.A., Russia & France for the further cooperation and development in the energy sector during the last six months; and

(b) if so, the details thereof and the countries with whom agreements were entered into along with the details of each agreement in the field of energy sector?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI ANAND SHARMA): (a) and (b) Government is engaged in a dialogue with a broad range of countries including the US, Russia and France on civilian nuclear energy cooperation with India. During the visit of Prime Minister to the US, the two sides issued a Joint Statement on July 18,2005 in which the US *inter-alia* stated that it will work with its partners to adjust the international regime to enable full international civil nuclear cooperation with India. Further discussions were held on this issue during the visit of President Bush to India in March 2006. During the visit of Prime Minister to Russian Federation in December 2005 both sides agreed to actively explore opportunities to further expand cooperation in the sphere of peaceful uses of atomic energy. India and France signed a Declaration on the Development of Nuclear Energy for Peaceful Purposes during the visit of President Jacques Chirac to India on February 20, 2006, which underlines the need to develop international cooperation in promoting the use of nuclear energy for peaceful purposes. These discussions are ongoing.

Indian medical practioners in UK

2744. SHRI AMAR SINGH:
SHRI MOTILAL VORA:
SHRI ABU ASIM AZMI:

Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that a large number of medical practitioners from our country who had gone to U.K. in search of job have been leading a miserable life on account of unemployment and most of them daily reach the Mahalaxmi temple in east London to eat free food; and

(b) whether the Government have made any assessment about the number of medical practitioners stranded in London and if so, the details thereof and what steps would be taken by Government for their repatriation?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI E. AHAMMED): (a) and (b) Requisite information is being collected from High Commission of India, London and will be laid on the table of the House as early as possible.

Relaxation of Visa Regime

2745. SHRIMATI SUKHBUNS KAUR:
SHRI KALRAJ MISHRA:

Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether relaxation of the Visa Regime between India and Pakistan has been high on the agenda of the talks at the Secretaries level, under the composite dialogue process;

(b) if so, whether talks have since been held on the subject, if so, what proposals were discussed on the subject; and

(c) the outcome thereof, and the steps since taken by the two countries in the light of such discussions?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI E. AHAMMED): (a) to (c) Government firmly believes that people to people contact is a significant factor in generating goodwill and promoting bilateral relations between the two countries, and it has consistently endeavoured to negotiate a Visa Regime that encourages such contacts. In keeping with this policy, Government announced unilateral visa liberalizations in September, 2004, which included, *inter alia*, multiple entry visas for accredited journalists, exemption from reporting to the police for various categories of Pakistani nationals such as those above 65 years of age, academicians, and doctros. In December 2004, Government announced additional visa liberalization measures such as visa on arrival at Wagah for certain categories of people and grant of student visas for allowing admission in Indian institutions to Pakistani students on a case-by-case basis.

India presented a draft proposing amendments to the present India-Pakistan Visa Agreement during the visit of former External Affairs Minister to Pakistan from 2-5 October, 2005. The draft envisages longer duration